



March 8, 2016

Three NAVAIR employees win Black Engineer of the Year Awards



From left, NAVAIR winners of the Black Engineer of the Year Awards: Danny Vereen, Lisa Worrell and Lashun Booth. These winners were recognized at the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Global Competitiveness Conference Feb. 18-20 in Philadelphia for demonstrating outstanding performance and shaping the future of STEM. (U.S. Navy photo)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. — Three NAVAIR employees were recognized as Modern Day Technology Leaders and Trailblazers at the 30th annual National Black Engineer of the Year Awards (BEYA) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Global Competitiveness Conference Feb. 18-20.

According to BEYA, these winners — Lashun Booth, Danny Vereen and Lisa Worrell — have demonstrated outstanding performance and will shape the future of STEM.

NAVAIR relies on STEM careers to accomplish research, testing and evaluation, and engineering services. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women and other minorities have been historically underrepresented in STEM fields.

NAVAIR employs more than 2,000 African-American employees (approximately 8.6 percent of the total workforce), with approximately 25 percent working in STEM positions.

Booth, a component improvement program manager, believes he is a STEM “trailblazer,”



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because of the challenging and critical position he took on, proving he could refine the program, exceed expectations and produce positive results.

"Always demonstrate a positive and 'can-do' attitude," he advised. "Come to work and do your best, because our warfighters are depending on us."

Vereen, an avionics systems engineering lead, and Worrell, an assistant program manager systems engineer, both cited creatively overcoming challenges as being key to their success, making them recognized "modern day technology leaders."

Vereen said leading his first test and evaluation project independently — and successfully revamping a predetermined project plan and test approach — was one of his greatest accomplishments at NAVAIR thus far.

"By completing this project, I gained confidence in my engineering leadership abilities," he said. "Consequently, this experience has continued to push me to seek challenging assignments throughout my career."

Similarly, Worrell said she is most proud of working as the lead engineer on the AGM-88E Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile Program, where she and her engineering team resolve numerous technical and administrative challenges and, ultimately, help implement new and novel technologies in naval weapons systems.

"I often remind myself of the question, 'How do you eat an elephant?' The answer: 'One bite at a time,'" she said. "This perspective often helps me avoid being overwhelmed, and it helps me to organize my priorities in the proper perspective."

Both Vereen and Worrell advise NAVAIR employees to continue to learn and grow their careers through training, job rotations and mentoring.

"Challenge decisions based on facts, not opinions," Vereen said, "and don't be afraid to seek advice when faced with challenges."

"Do not be afraid to ask for help when you need it, and do not be afraid to take risks, as they can actually lead to a more rewarding career," Worrell advised.

The [BEYA STEM Conference](#), held in Philadelphia, brought together thousands of STEM professionals and leaders committed to increasing the percentage of minorities in the technology workforce. The next conference is scheduled for February 2017 in Washington, D.C.



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From left, NAVAIR employees Lashun Booth, Danny Vereen, Israel Jordan and Maria Thorpe at the career fair portion of the Black Engineer of the Year Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Global Competitiveness Conference Feb. 19 in Philadelphia.



From left, Duy-Loan T. Le, Danny Vereen and Dr. Kendall Harris at the Black Engineer of the Year Modern Day Technology Leaders luncheon Feb. 19 in Philadelphia.



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